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BS 501 Introduction to Biblical Studies I

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Stone, Lawson G., "BS 501 Introduction to Biblical Studies I" (2004). *Syllabi*. Book 1486.
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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BS 501 Introduction to Biblical Studies—1
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I. GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The two-course sequence of BS 500-501 comprises three interrelated topics: (1) an introduction to the concept and significance of the canon of Scripture, the discipline of hermeneutics, and a contextual, text-centered approach to biblical interpretation; (2) an introduction to the OT in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts; and (3) an introduction to the New Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts. Course participation, reading, and projects will be configured in part so as to reflect the character of the degree specializations represented among the course participants. In order to achieve credit for either course, the full, two-course sequence must be completed successfully. Required of all M.A. (Professional), M.A. in Theological Studies, and M.A. Counseling degree students. BS 500 focuses on the OT.

The course aspires to sketch a comprehensive approach, emphasizing both direct textual study in the context of contemporary approaches to the literary character, historical and cultural setting, composition, authorship, and literary unity of these books. A central axiom of the class is that the OT emerges from a cultural and ethnic setting that is *radically different from those of any contemporary culture*. Thus to study the OT in connection with the settings of its emergence is to learn to *receive* God's word cross-culturally, which forms a necessary preparation for *testifying* to the message of God's word cross-culturally. Thus the very act of responsible and holistic interpretation involves grasping, affirming, and moving creatively between the text's ethnic and cultural framework and our own.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES: The student who fully realizes the objectives of the course will, upon completing the course, be able to:

- A. Trace the development of canonization, discuss the meaning and significance of the canon and of canonicity, especially the canon and canonicity of the OT, and articulate the major issues involved in the relationship between the testaments.
- B. Describe the basic historical and cultural background of the Bible, specifically, the historical setting of the OT story and make appropriate use of this historical information in the interpretation of the OT texts.
- C. Explain and illustrate the major issues in hermeneutics use these insights to interpret and apply the OT text.
- D. Demonstrate, in a rudimentary way, the ability to observe, interpret, and apply the OT text, and to show the significance of this interpretation and application of the biblical text for the tasks of his/her ministerial vocation. Specifically, the student will
 - (a) identify the overall structure of a biblical book by dividing into major and minor sections and identifying the logical thought-flow through those sections;
 - (b) engage in a "close reading" of individual passages so as to make relevant observations useful for interpretation;

- (c) employ various kinds of information to gain insight into interpretation of the text, e.g., context, word usage, historical background, literary genre, the history of interpretation for the interpretation of the OT text;
 - (d) move from interpretation of the OT passage to specific and creative application to contemporary Christian life, including the exemplifying of principles that must be kept in mind in the use of the OT for Christian application.
 - (e) Show how the teachings of individual passages within the OT contribute to the flow of biblical revelation as a whole,
- E. Begin integrating the competent, responsible study of the Bible, particularly the OT, to is/her vocation.

III. COURSE REQUIRED TEXTS

D. Bauer, *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003.

Drane, John. *Introducing the Old Testament*. Completely Revised and Updated edition. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.

Klein, W., Craig L. Blomberg and R. L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993.

Revised Standard Version of the Bible or *New American Standard Bible* or some other contemporary, formal (vs. dynamic) equivalence translation with *minimal editorial clutter* (i.e. no study notes) in the layout. NRSV and NIV are also fine.

Thompson, David L. *Bible Study That Works*. Revised edition. Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1994.

Several articles of importance for OT Studies have been scanned and saved as PDF or MS Word documents, and are located in the "Articles" folder on the Course Center with the lecture materials. Power Point files (PDF) will also be posted to the lecture drive *after completion of the unit, not beforehand*.

Required Access to Reference Materials: You will from time to time need to use one of the following multi-volume Bible encyclopedia sets. No substitutes are permitted. You do not have to own these, but they are a worthy addition to your library. Often one or the other is available in public libraries. The Asbury Bookstore can facilitate purchase should you wish to do so, as well as other dealers in theological books.

The Anchor Bible Encyclopedia. New York: Doubleday, 1992. 6 Volumes. Also available on CD.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Edition. Ed. G. Bromily. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 4 Volumes. Note this is *not the work by the same name found on most biblical studies software disks*. Regardless of what they say is the publication date, the version of *ISBE* found on, e.g. *BibleWorks* edited by James Orr and dates from the 1920's and *is not acceptable for use in this class*.

New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, 5 vols; ed. W. Van Gemeren, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. Available on CD-ROM.

The Course Conference. As soon as possible early in the first week of class, students will find an OT 520 Conference icon on their FirstClass desktop in the ATS e-mail system. This conference serves several functions:

1. It is where several **articles and other course materials** will be posted
2. A **discussion forum** is held there to allow for your questions, further discussion of issues raised in class, etc. You are encouraged to make the most of this opportunity. I

check this several times per day and usually can respond immediately to issues raised. *This is also a forum in which you can "take me on" if you want to debate course content issues.* Periodically I will be posting "polls" to find out student opinion and reaction to various topics relevant to the conduct of the course.

3. **Announcements** to the class as a whole will be made here
4. **Tests** will be posted to the Course Center

Course materials *will not be available elsewhere*. Therefore it is essential for students to have an ATS e-mail account (free) and avail themselves of the computing services offered at ATS if they do not have e-mail access from home.

Note: Computer, Internet, and E-Mail skills are assumed. We have the finest Instructional Technology staff in the country. Students needing assistance will find the IT staff extremely knowledgeable, experienced, helpful, and sympathetic. The professor cannot provide support for students issues with computers, software, etc. Please refer all such matters to the IT staff. Note also that computer crashes, printers running out of ink, etc. *are not acceptable excuses for late work!* The digital dog eating your homework is just as lame an excuse now as it was in High School ;-)

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE

Grading is on a Points system. Each assignment is worth a set number of points. The total will be the final grade with a possible maximum of 300. The grade derives from:

- A. **Attendance:** Attendance is extremely important. The professor employs a "no-fault" attendance policy. There is no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. An attendance grade is recorded reflecting the total number of days the student attended class. All absences "count" against this total, but any absence can be made up and removed. Normally a makeup will involve listening to an audio recording of the missed class session and writing a 1-page response. In cases where an audio recording is not possible, a reasonable reading assignment with a 2-page summary suffices. Attendance will be recorded on a chart on the wall in the back of the classroom. Students are responsible for recording their attendance. Do not record anyone else's attendance, please. The total days students attend, up to a maximum of 25, will be recorded as a point total.
- B. **Readings:** Two reading reports will be submitted, at midterm and final. Students will be asked to report the percentage of readings assigned *to date* that have been completed. For the final report, that is the percentage of *all class readings*. Students will be given a scale from 1-15 on which to report how much of the reading assigned to date they have completed. The scale will be based on a rough percentage. The two reading reports will be totaled and entered as a total points score, with 30 as the maximum.

A note on reading assignments: Readings are correlated to specific days to help students read the books in a sequence that complements class presentations. In addition, assignments ("Lessons") are much easier to complete, and usual get a higher grade, when students have read the text material reasonable apace with the schedule. Except for the reading of Thompson's *Bible Study that Works*, *these are not fixed due dates*. It is recognized that students will not always be able to read the exact assignments for each day. wise student will endeavor to follow the reading plan as closely as possible.

- C. **6 Biblical Study Assignments** will be completed, implementing the interpretive processes covered in the course. These lessons will be scored at 20 points each, yielding a total of 120 points total. Specific instructions for each lesson will be posted to the Course Center in the First Class intranet at the beginning of the semester.

- D. Completion of **2 examinations** involving OT historical background, content and critical issues. Material covered by lectures and the books by Drane and Klein-Hubbard-Bush, will be addressed in a mid-term and final examination. The tests will be multiple choice in nature, but not mechanical or merely recognition oriented. Questions will require of students critical judgment and balancing of alternatives. Sometimes a biblical passage will be presented and students will respond to a series of questions requiring some level of analysis of the passage based on knowledge gained from the course. These will be take-home tests, to be taken within a continuous, uninterrupted 75-minute period for the mid-term, 90 minutes for the Final. There are to be no notes, books, or consultations during the exam. Students are on their honor not to discuss the exam in any way with anyone who has not yet completed it. The test will be distributed online. Students will obtain a machine-readable answer form from the professor's office. Answer forms will be collected in class on the due dates. The mid-term exam will be worth 50 points, the final will be worth 75 points, for a total of 125 points.
- E. **No assignment may be skipped.** All work must be turned in to pass the course.
- F. **Extra Credit Assignments** are possible, but no more than 10 points may be earned. An extra credit assignment will require about 75 minutes work for each 2 points earned, though this will vary from student to student.

The Total Points will yield letter grades according to the following table:

Letter	From	To
A	285	300
A-	270	282
B+	261	267
B	252	258
B-	240	249
C+	231	237
C	222	228
C-	210	219
D+	201	207
D	192	198
D-	180	189
F	0	177

OVERVIEW OF COURSE TOPICS

- I. Orientation: Why Study the OT? (1 week)
- II. Getting the Story From the Book—The Literary Context of the OT (3 Weeks)
- III. Keeping the Book In the Story—The Historical and Cultural Context of the OT (Apologies to J. R. R. Tolkien!)
 - a. The Fellowship of the King: God Forms a People
 - b. The Two Powers: The Fellowship Declines, Divides, and Dies
 - c. The Return of the Ring: Rediscovering and Reinventing the People of God
 - d. There and Back Again: the Word Became Text
- IV. From Book To Story—The Life Application of Biblical Teaching

PROJECTED COURSE CALENDER

Date	Topic	Due	Readings
Orientation			
T 10-Feb	Why Study the OT?		G. E. Wright "The Church's Need for the OT" KBH 3-20
R 12-Feb	Why "Study" the OT?		Drane 8-35 W. Robertson-Smith, Chapter 1 from <i>The Old Testament and the Jewish Church</i>
Getting the Story From The Book			
T 17-Feb	Getting the Story From the Book: Observing a Segment		KBH 21-51 Thompson <i>Bible Study That Works</i> (all)
R 19-Feb	Observing Genesis 1:1-2:4a	Les 1 Due	
T 24-Feb	Observing Genesis 2:4b-25	Les 2 Due	
R 26-Feb	Observing Up Close		Drane 228-252 KBH 81-151
T 2-Mar	Analysis of Genesis 2:7	Les 3 Due	
R 4-Mar	Interpretation: From Information to Insight		Drane 253-276 KBH 155-214
T 9-Mar	Back To Adam's Soul	Les 4 Due	
Keeping the Book in the Story			
R 11-Mar	Fellowship of the King: God Forms a Fellowship (3200-1000 BC) The Promise of Yahweh: OT in the Ancient Near East (3200-1200)		Drane 36-47,
T 16-Mar			KBH 259-284
R 18-Mar	The People of Sinai: The Era of the Exodus (1200-1000)		Drane 47-86 KBH 284-322
T 23-Mar			Drane 277-305
R 25-Mar	The King in Zion: The United Monarchy (1000-921)		Drane 87-119
30-Mar-	No Class		

1-Apr	Reading Week		
T 6-Apr	The Two Powers: The Breaking of the Fellowship The Breaking of the Fellowship: The Divided Kingdoms (921-721)	Mid Term Posted	Drane 120-146 Drane 306-337
R 8-Apr		Mid Term Exam Due	Reading Report For Assigned Reading to Date
T 13-Apr	The Failure of the Promise-Bearer:: The Judean State (721-587)		Drane 147-172
R 15-Apr		Les 5 Due	
T 20-Apr	Return of the Ring: Rediscovering the Promise, Reinventing the Fellowship The Furnace of Suffering: The Babylonian Exile (597-539)		Drane 173-206
R22-Apr			KBH 215-255
T 27-Apr	The Refined Silver: The Restoration (539-150)		Drane 207-227
R 29-Apr			Drane 228-252
T 4-May	There and Back Again: The Word Became Text		KBH 53-78 KBH 377-399
R 6-May			Drane 338-360 KBH 401-426
From Book To Story			
T 11-May	Evaluation & Application: Living the Text	Final Exam Posted	KBH 427-457 Reading Report for All Assigned Reading to date
R 13-May		Final Exam Due	
R 20-May	Final Exam Period/Presentation	Les 6 Due	

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Consult David R. Bauer's work in the text list for full, up to date bibliography.

MID TERM READING REPORT DUE IN CLASS APRIL 8

Name _____

Total Reading Points (Max. 15) _____

This report covers all readings assigned up to and including April 6, 2004

USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE to calculate your points:

15: 100%
14; 95%
13; 90%
12; 85%
11; 80%
10; 75%
9; 70%
8; 65%
7; 60%
6; 55%
5; 50%
4; 45%
3; 40%
2; 35%
1; 30%

FINAL READING REPORT DUE IN CLASS MAY 11

Name _____

Total Reading Points (Max. 15) _____

This report covers all readings assigned up to and including May 11, 2004

USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE to calculate your points:

15: 100%
14; 95%
13; 90%
12; 85%
11; 80%
10; 75%
9; 70%
8; 65%
7; 60%
6; 55%
5; 50%
4; 45%
3; 40%
2; 35%
1; 30%

Student Record of Points**Please complete this form (except for the Lesson 6 Score) and turn in with Lesson 6:**

1. _____ Number of Days Attended (Max 25)

2. _____ Total Reading Points (Max. 30)

USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE for each of the two reports:

15: 100%

14; 95%

13; 90%

12; 85%

11; 80%

10; 75%

9; 70%

8; 65%

7; 60%

6; 55%

5; 50%

4; 45%

3; 40%

2; 35%

1; 30%

_____ First Report (Max 15)

_____ Second Report (Max 15)

3. _____ Mid Term Test (Max 50)

4. _____ Final Test (Max 75)

5. _____ Total Biblical Study Lessons (Max 120)

_____ Lesson 1

_____ Lesson 2

_____ Lesson 3

_____ Lesson 4

_____ Lesson 5

_____ Lesson 6

6. _____ Extra Credit Completed (Max 10)

_____ **Total Points**

Biblical Study Lessons**Lesson 1**

Observation of Segments as Wholes: Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Lesson 2

Observation of Segments as Wholes: Genesis 2:4b-25

Lesson 3

Detailed Observation: Genesis 2:7

What subjects and skills would be needed to answer the most important of these questions?

Lesson 4

Interpretation: Genesis 2:7 The meaning of "he [Adam] became a living soul"

*study occurrences of *nephesh* in the Pentateuch

*read *ABD* articles

*assess statements about "the soul"

Lesson 5

Observation—Survey of Books as Wholes: The Book of Amos

Lesson 6:

Interpretation: Interpretation using Historical Background and Secondary Sources: Amos 9:7-15

Identify key terms and matters that could be studied historically

Do research in reference materials

Frame the message of this unit, specifically for Amos' era, and for a later era